

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, re-examination and reconsideration of the subject matter identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.112, and in light of the remarks which follow are respectfully requested.

Claim 35 has been amended to insert the feature of claim 36. The dependency of claim 42 has been changed from canceled claim 36 to claim 35. Claim 55 has been amended to add the features of claims 57 and 58. Claims 36, 56-58 and 65 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 35, 37-55, 59-64 and 66-68 remain pending in this application.

Claims 35-68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yoshikawa et al. (Chemical Abstracts, Vol. 119, page 464, 119:187558d, 1993) in view of Clark et al. (Chemical Engineering Progress, January 1996, pgs. 65-77) for the reasons set forth in paragraph (2) of the Office Action. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and for at least the following reasons.

Yoshikawa et al. disclose a system for predicting the risk of explosion when mixtures of gases are to be manufactured. The system involves determining the concentration of each gas to be mixed. If the concentration is beyond the safety limit, then the manufacture of the mixture "is rejected".

In contrast to the system described above, the system described in the claims as amended, determines the transit time of the gaseous mixture through the flammability region and the chemical induction time of said mixture and estimates whether the transit time is shorter than the chemical induction time. If so, then the

manufacture of the gaseous mixture may proceed even through the safety limit is exceeded.

The article by Clark et al. includes a description of ternary flammability diagrams. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Clark et al. concerning a process or apparatus for determining the risk of flammability in the manufacture of gaseous mixtures which includes the steps and means set forth in the present claims. Accordingly, the combined disclosures of Yoshikawa et al. and Clark et al. does not render obvious the present invention.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the § 103(a) rejection should be withdrawn. Such action is earnestly requested.

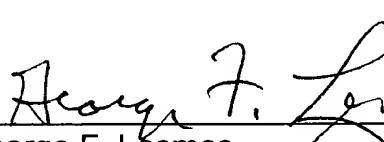
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 838-6683 at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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